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Report of the Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi*

Summary

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi was mandated by the Economic and Social Council to examine the humanitarian and economic needs of the country and provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community is adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective and promotes synergy. The work of the Group has been carried out at an important moment, as the people of Burundi are tackling the peace process with vigour and embarking on the road from relief to development. The country faces various and interlinked challenges, which it is crucial to confront in order to promote stability and ensure durable peace and sustainable development.

Burundi is located in the middle of the troubled Great Lakes region. It is a country emerging from 10 years of conflict following an initiative of the African Heads of State and Government that resulted in the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, signed on 28 August 2000 at Arusha. Further negotiations produced two Protocols signed at Pretoria, South Africa, on 8 October and 2 November 2003, followed by a Global Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government and CNDD-FDD, the main rebel group led by Pierre Nkurunziza, signed at Dar es Salaam on 16 November 2003. The level of violence in the country has been significantly reduced, and it is estimated that in 95 per cent of the country hostilities have ceased. However, PALIPEHUTU-FNL, led by Agathon Rwasa, remains outside the peace process and creates a climate of violence and fear in and around the capital city of Bujumbura. From 18 to 21 January 2004, the President of Burundi, Domitien Ndayizeye, held talks with PALIPEHUTU-FNL at Oisterwijk, the Netherlands, to discuss the possibility of securing a ceasefire agreement and of PALIPEHUTU-FNL

* The report is submitted late in order to reflect recent important developments relating to international support for Burundi.

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joining the Transitional Government. During the talks, President Ndayizeye and the leaders of PALIPEHUTU-FNL agreed to appoint an international commission of inquiry to investigate the tragic killing of the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Michael Courtney.

Underpinning the Arusha peace process is the presence of the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB), composed of 3,000 troops from Ethiopia, Mozambique and South Africa. AMIB, which enjoys the support of bilateral donors, is tasked to maintain stability in Burundi and create conditions for a United Nations involvement in Burundi. The Security Council has invited the Secretary-General to submit recommendations early in March 2004 on how the United Nations can give the most efficient support to the full implementation of the Arusha Agreement. This follows a request to the Security Council by the African Union that consideration be given to the replacement of AMIB by a United Nations peacekeeping force.

The return of peace to Burundi has exposed the enormous humanitarian, economic and social challenges faced by the Transitional Government. Burundi is densely populated and has the highest proportion of displaced persons of any African country. Burundi is classified as a least developed country, with more than 90 per cent of the population living in rural areas. Coffee represents 85 per cent of the country's commercial export; owing to the decline of its price in the commodities market, Burundi's foreign exchange earnings were reduced by more than 60 per cent. In addition, 89.2 per cent of the population live on less than $2 a day, and 58.4 per cent on less that $1 a day. The World Bank estimates that the economy has contracted by 25 per cent over the past five years. It is unlikely, under these circumstances and without international support, that Burundi can reach any of the Millennium Development Goals.

The Ad Hoc Advisory Group consulted widely with a number of interlocutors within the United Nations system, bilateral donors, and the Bretton Woods institutions. The Group also visited Burundi and met with President Ndayizeye, Cabinet Ministers, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Country Team, civil society, international aid organizations, and members of the diplomatic corps. The Group was encouraged by the efforts made by Burundi to cope with the changing situation. However, as resolute as the Government and other social actors may be, and as well defined as their objectives are, their success is totally dependent on strong international support and a genuine partnership with the development partners.

The international community has begun responding to the needs of Burundi. A consolidated appeal process for 2004 was launched on 19 November 2003 and the United Nations country team and its partners requested US$ 71,545,567 to support projects that assist the most vulnerable, while laying the ground for development and reconciliation. In 2003, $21 million was raised in a similar appeal. A successful Forum of Development Partners of Burundi attended by 25 countries was held on 13 and 14 January 2004 in Brussels. It was organized jointly by the Governments of Belgium and Burundi, with technical assistance from the United Nations Development Programme. The Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund has approved a three-year arrangement for Burundi under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility to support the country's economic reform programme until January 2007. This will open the way for debt relief for Burundi under the enhanced Initiative for Heavily Indebted Poor Countries by 2005. The Paris Club had committed itself to

granting debt relief as soon as the arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility was approved by the Executive Board of IMF.

Burundi is in need of emergency assistance, including budgetary support, at this critical moment in the evolution of the peace process. Adequate support must also be provided to allow the country to embark on the path of sustainable development. Continued support for AMIB, pending the possible deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force, will be critical for sustainable peace as Burundi prepares for elections at the end of October. The overall political situation has never been as promising as it is now. Without sustained international support, however, this promise may not be fulfilled.

I. Introduction

1. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi was formed pursuant to Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/16 of 21 July 2003. This is the second Ad Hoc Advisory Group created by the Council, the first being the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau.[1] By resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002 the Council created a framework for an ad hoc advisory group on African countries emerging from conflict and mandated that the group examine the humanitarian and economic needs of the country concerned; review relevant programmes of support and prepare recommendations for a long-term programme of support, based on its development priorities, through the integration of relief, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development into a comprehensive approach to peace and stability; and provide advice on how to ensure that the assistance of the international community in supporting the country concerned is adequate, coherent, well coordinated and effective and promotes synergy.

2. In a letter addressed to the President of the Economic and Social Council (see E/2002/86), the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations requested that the Council set up an Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi. As a result, the Council decided to establish the Group and to undertake consultations on its modalities of work in such a way as to enable the Group to participate in the planned donor round table to be organized by the Government of Burundi in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In its decision 2003/311 of 22 August 2003, the Council decided on the composition and terms of reference of the Group. The mandate, set out in Council resolution 2002/1 was retained for the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi. The Council requested the Group to submit a report on its recommendations to the Council by mid-January 2004.

3. The Group is composed as follows: Ambassador Dumisani Shadrack Kumalo (South Africa), Chairman, Ambassador Koichi Haraguchi (Japan), Ambassador Abdul Mejid Hussein (Ethiopia), Ambassador Marc Nteturuye (Burundi), Ambassador Jean de Ruyt (Belgium) and Ambassador Jean-Marc de La Sablière (France). In accordance with Council decision 2003/311, Ambassador Gert Rosenthal (Guatemala), then President of the Economic and Social Council, and Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins (Angola), Chairman of the Ad Hoc Working Group of the Security Council on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, were invited to take part in its work, which they did.

4. The establishment of the Group also led to a closer working relationship between the Economic and Social Council and the Security Council. The President of the Economic and Social Council informed the President of the Security Council of the creation of the Group in a letter dated 25 August 2003 (distributed as S/2003/836). The Security Council welcomed the establishment and the work of the Group in a statement to the press delivered by the President of the Council on 14 August 2003 and in a presidential statement of 22 December 2003 (S/PRST/2003/30).[2] The President of the Economic and Social Council was invited to address the Security Council at a meeting on the situation in Burundi held on 4 December 2003, a meeting attended by the Deputy President of South Africa Jacob Zuma, facilitator of the Arusha peace process.

II. Highlights of the activities of the Group

5. Since its first meeting on 11 September 2003, the Group has held a series of briefing sessions and meetings in New York with major United Nations and international interlocutors to discuss various aspects of development assistance to Burundi. These included:

- Kieran Prendergast, Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs
- Jacques Loup, Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Director, UNDP Regional Bureau for Africa
- Emmanuel Mbi, Country Director, South Central Africa and the Great Lakes, World Bank
- Philippe Beaugrand, Deputy Division Chief, Africa Department, International Monetary Fund
- Marie-Thérèse A. Kéita-Bocoum, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Burundi
- Department of Political Affairs, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and United Nations Development Programme
- The Rome-based agencies, namely the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Bilateral donor countries.

6. The Group also had the honour of meeting the President of Burundi, Domitien Ndayizeye, when he attended the opening of the fifty-eighth session of the General Assembly in September 2003.

7. By means of those meetings and consultations, the Group gained an overview of the challenges confronting Burundi and a better understanding of its relations with the development community at large.

8. In November 2003, the Group decided to undertake a mission to Burundi and to meet the government authorities, major socio-economic interlocutors, the United Nations entities active on the ground, and other development partners. The mission of the Group took place from 19 to 26 November 2003 and was hosted by Berhanu Dinka, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Chief of the United Nations Office in Burundi (UNOB), and Sunil Saigal, Resident Coordinator of operational activities of the United Nations system in Burundi.

9. The Group had an extensive programme of meetings and consultations with a wide range of national leaders and dignitaries. On the governmental side, the Group met the President and the Vice-President of the Republic and had a working session with Cabinet Ministers led by the Minister of Planning, Development and Reconstruction and including the Minister of Justice, the Minister for the Reinsertion and Resettlement of Displaced Persons and Returnees, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of Social Affairs and the Advancement of Women, the Minister of Human Rights, Institutional Reforms and Relations with the National Assembly, the Minister of Communal Development, and the Governor of the Bank of the Republic. Meetings were also held with the bureaux

of the Senate and the National Assembly, the Implementation Monitoring Committee of the Arusha Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi and the President and Vice-President of the National Commission for the Rehabilitation of *Sinistrés*.

10. The Group met representatives of the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Arts and Crafts and approximately 40 civil society organizations, including those active in religious matters, human rights, the advancement of women, children, youth, community development and HIV/AIDS. The Group also met with trade union leaders. The Group travelled to Gitega Province for discussions with the Governor and members of the regional authority and also visited projects supported by United Nations agencies and a site in which internally displaced persons were supported by WFP.

11. The Group also held a series of meetings with international stakeholders, including the Special Representative of the President of the Commission of the African Union and Chief of the African Mission in Burundi, officials of UNOB and the United Nations country team, the diplomatic corps, and representatives of international non-governmental organizations. The members of the Group, who had the pleasure of meeting the Apostolic Nuncio, Monsignor Michael Courtney, in Bujumbura, was deeply saddened by his tragic assassination one month later.

12. Following the mission to Burundi, three members of the Group participated, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 2003/16, in the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi, held in Brussels on 13 and 14 January 2004.

13. The Group wishes to express its gratitude for the support it received from the Government of Burundi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the United Nations Resident Coordinator and the United Nations country team, the United Nations Secretariat, and all those who took time off to brief the Group, answer its questions and exchange ideas. The Group thanks in particular the Office for ECOSOC Support and Coordination of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for its continuous support.

III. Background

14. Burundi is a small landlocked country of the Great Lakes region of Africa. Surrounded by Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania, its borders are shaped by natural features, including several rivers and the vastness of Lake Tanganyika. As a result of an unprecedented population increase over the past five decades (from 2 million in 1950 to 6.9 million today) on a small territory (27,834 km^2), Burundi has a density of 228 people per km^2, the second highest in Africa (after Rwanda). Burundi's population is composed of three ethnic groups, the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, all of whom share the same language, culture and religion.

15. The country functioned as a kingdom for centuries. Colonized by Germany in 1899, Burundi was ruled by Belgium under a League of Nations mandate and a United Nations trusteeship from 1916 until 1962, when it gained independence. Ethnic tensions between the Hutu majority and the Tutsi minority have marked the political life of the country since then. Violent uprisings periodically occurred; in 1972, tens of thousands of people were killed and around 200,000 sought refuge in

the United Republic of Tanzania, where the majority still remain. The first democratic elections were held in 1993, in which Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu, was elected as President. President Ndadaye was assassinated four months after taking office. Massacres of Tutsis were carried out, followed by reprisals. Tens of thousands of people were killed while hundreds of thousands fled their homes.

16. In 1994, President Cyprien Ntaryamira, the successor of President Ndadaye, died when the aeroplane carrying him and the President of Rwanda was shot down over Kigali. In 1996, Major Pierre Buyoya returned to power by means of a coup, which was condemned by neighbouring countries and led to regional economic sanctions, with dramatic consequences for the socio-economic situation of the country. Those regional sanctions were suspended in January 1999.

17. The heads of State of the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union, designated President Julius Nyerere (United Republic of Tanzania), followed by President Nelson Mandela (South Africa), as facilitators of the Burundi peace process, under the Regional Initiative for Peace in Burundi. Intensive diplomatic efforts resulted in the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, signed on 28 August 2000 at Arusha by 19 political parties. Major Hutu rebel groups refused to lay down their arms, however. In 2001, the Deputy President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, was designated as the official mediator by President Mandela with the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa, and the President of Gabon, Omar Bongo, as co-facilitators. On 1 November 2001, a Transitional Government was established on the basis of the Arusha Agreement and following the provisions in the transitional constitution. On 30 April 2003, President Buyoya handed over the Presidency to the current President, Domitien Ndayizeye, for an 18-month term as agreed under the Arusha Agreement. The Arusha peace process is intended to culminate in national elections in November 2004.

IV. Recent political developments

18. Since its creation, the Ad Hoc Advisory Group has witnessed major developments in the Burundi peace process. Diplomatic efforts led to the signing in Pretoria of the Protocols on political, defence and security power-sharing on 8 October and 2 November 2003. Those agreements led to the global Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government and the Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie-Forces pour la défense de la démocratie (CNDD-FDD), a major Hutu rebel group, signed at Dar es Salaam on 16 November 2003. Ministers from CNDD-FDD joined the Transitional Government and assumed duties late in November, including Pierre Nkurunziza, leader of CNDD-FDD, as Minister for Good Governance and State Inspection. On 6 January 2004, a joint army command was established comprising officers from the government army and CNDD-FDD, thereby taking the peace process further into a decisive phase. The level of violence has been significantly reduced, and it is estimated that in 95 per cent of the territory hostilities between different movements have ceased.

19. The Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu and its military wing, the Forces nationales pour la libération (PALIPEHUTU-FNL) (Agathon Rwasa) remains the only rebel group outside the peace process and has continued to fight from the rural area around Bujumbura, creating a climate of violence and fear in and around the city. However, the Group was much encouraged by the fact that PALIPEHUTU-FNL

(Rwasa) held meetings with President Ndayizeye from 18 to 21 January at Oisterwijk, the Netherlands, to discuss the possibility of securing a ceasefire agreement and joining the Transitional Government.

20. On 11 January 2004, President Ndayizeye presented to political parties a draft electoral code, one of the prerequisites for holding the elections called for by the Arusha Agreement before the end of the transition period in November 2004.

21. In accordance with the Arusha Agreement, the Transitional Government has requested the Security Council to establish an international judicial commission of inquiry to investigate cases of genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since the independence of the country. In parallel, the Government has presented to Parliament a proposal for the creation of a National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation.

22. With these developments, Burundi has never been as close to a comprehensive and fully inclusive peace as it is now. The disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants has become a priority issue, for which funds are available in the framework of the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme managed by the World Bank. Moreover, bilateral contributions will finance the pre-cantonment of combatants, for which the latter programme cannot be used.

23. In view of the integration of members of armed movements in the national army as a result of the peace process, the number of soldiers is expected to increase, potentially reaching 65,000, and this will place an added burden on the State's budget. To address this situation, the Government has announced a planned demobilization process which aims at reducing the number of soldiers by 10,000 annually over a four-year period, and has requested international support for this process.

24. There are reports of increasing violations of human rights in some parts of the country. It is also to be deplored that acts of banditry and a climate of impunity are reported, which add to the allegations of corruption, a phenomenon that has increased considerably in recent years. It was stressed to the Group that these challenges were the results of the war, which weakened, or even destroyed, the institutions of governance. The Government of Burundi has condemned these allegations and promised to investigate.

25. The Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution of the African Union deployed the African Mission in Burundi (AMIB) and its first detachments arrived in Bujumbura on 27 April 2003 with the stated aim of creating conditions for the deployment of a United Nations peacekeeping force. The deployment of some 3,000 troops from South Africa, Ethiopia and Mozambique was completed by October 2003. The Mission is headed by Ambassador Mamadou Bah, whom the Group met in Bujumbura. Several bilateral donors have provided financial support to AMIB, which carries out crucial tasks in the country, including the pre-cantonment of combatants. The Security Council has invited the Secretary-General to submit recommendations early in March 2004 on how the United Nations can give the most efficient support to the full implementation of the Arusha Agreement. The funding of AMIB depends on voluntary contributions and the question of its financing in the long term needs to be

addressed. The Group was informed of the request for its replacement by a United Nations peacekeeping force.

V. Overview of the humanitarian, economic and social situation

A. The humanitarian context

26. The economic and social fabric of the country bears the consequences of a decade of continuous violence, which has claimed the lives of close to 300,000 people, primarily civilians. According to United Nations humanitarian and development agencies, the level of vulnerability among the general population is one of the highest in the world. Over 70 per cent of the internally displaced persons living in camps have no access to the minimum daily requirement of drinking water and food. The number of persons admitted to the nutritional and health-care centres jointly supported by UNICEF, WFP and the World Health Organization (WHO) continues to increase. In 2003, more than 1.2 million people received food from WFP and 630,000 people are expected to benefit from this assistance every month early in 2004. Many communities have lost their capacity to sustain themselves and been dispossessed, looted by rebels, rogue armed forces and bandits. Another source of concern is landmines, which have claimed many victims.

27. As a consequence of the war, women head 30 per cent of Burundi households. This has led to the formation of Barundi women's associations to advocate for increased protection of women and girls from gender-based violence. Children are also affected: more than 14,000 child soldiers have been enrolled in the national army, militia and rebel forces since the beginning of the conflict. More than 600,000 other children are orphans of war. Infant mortality has reached the alarming rate of 114 per thousand births. The United Nations system estimates that vaccination coverage and primary school attendance have decreased by a third since 1993.

28. Life expectancy at birth fell by 10 years, to 40.9 years, in 2001. The health sector dramatically lacks means, logistics and human resources. Malaria is increasing throughout the country and is now the most devastating disease. The Burundi Ministry of Health and WHO have introduced a new treatment protocol and UNICEF and international non-governmental organizations cooperate in these endeavours. Access to medicine was mentioned as a continuous problem that demanded urgent solutions by the Government in cooperation with its development partners. The incidence of HIV infection is also a growing source of concern. According to UNAIDS,[3] 40,000 Burundians died because of AIDS in 2001 and 8.3 per cent of those aged between 15 and 49 years live with HIV/AIDS. A recent mobilization of all Burundian stakeholders should help to mitigate the expansion of the disease.

29. Through the consolidated appeal process for 2004, launched on 19 November 2003, the United Nations country team and its partners have requested US$ 71,545,567 to support projects that assist the most vulnerable, while laying the ground for development and reconciliation. It is therefore crucial that the 2004 appeal receive the attention it deserves and be properly funded. Response by donors to previous appeals has been disappointing, as Burundi managed to attract around one third of what was requested, mostly to answer basic food needs and provide

other support to refugees and internally displaced persons. Contributions, pledges and funds carried over to the consolidated appeal for 2003 stand at $21,263,348, that is, 29.7 per cent of the funds sought. This year, the case of Burundi received specific attention at the annual launching events of all appeals at Geneva and was selected, in the framework of the Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative, to be considered for increased support to the work of the humanitarian community there.

B. The return of refugees and internally displaced persons

30. Burundians suffer from one of the highest proportions of displaced persons of any African country. More than 17 per cent of the population is either displaced or living as refugees. At least 13 per cent of all Burundians depend on external assistance to survive. More than 281,000 internally displaced persons live in 230 sites throughout the country, and 750,000 refugees live in exile, where many receive assistance from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). At the same time, 37,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo live on the Burundian territory and also receive assistance from United Nations agencies.

31. Some of the refugees have started to return spontaneously from the United Republic of Tanzania to the northern and central provinces of Burundi, and this trend has increased over the past months. UNHCR expects that 300,000 refugees will return from the United Republic of Tanzania early in 2004. With the signing of the two Pretoria Protocols, refugees and internally displaced persons look forward to a planned process of repatriation and reintegration.

32. The Arusha Agreement created the National Commission for the Rehabilitation of *Sinistrés* to organize and coordinate all aspects of the return of refugees and internally displaced persons, from emergency assistance to social and professional reinsertion. The Commission is now in place and an action plan has been prepared to guide its work. However, in view of the expected massive return of people in the short to medium term, Burundian institutions cannot deal with the issue alone. The estimated cost of activities in this field is €500 million, including agricultural rehabilitation, for which international assistance is sought. In this context, it is important to clarify the respective areas of work of the Commission and the Ministry for the Reinsertion and Resettlement of Displaced Persons and Returnees.

33. The combined effects of the high population density and the massive return of people to their land, in a country where 91 per cent of the population is rural, raises the issue of access to land. Some refugees have been victims of land expropriation and the 1972 refugees cannot lodge claims to their land as the legal deadline (*prescription*) has been reached. The Government faces the challenge of finding ways to manage the conflicting demands for land from internally displaced persons and returning refugees. One suggested way of dealing with these challenges is to reinforce and expand the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms such as the *Bashingantahe* and also to find a proper articulation with the formal justice system. The right of women to own land was mentioned as an urgent issue of concern that will need to be explicitly stated and addressed in revised national legislation.

C. The economic situation

34. Burundi is classified as a least developed country. With 89.2 per cent of the population living on less than $2 a day and 58.4 per cent on less than $1 a day, Burundi's human development index is 0.337, ranking 171 out of 175 countries.[4] In 2002, the economic growth rate was estimated at 2 per cent in real terms, less than the estimated 3 per cent growth of the population, resulting in a significant increase in the poverty level. Gross national income per capita is $110, much less than the average of sub-Saharan Africa ($490) and a quarter of that of low income countries as a group. The adult literacy rate is 49 per cent.[4]

35. The gross domestic product fell from $1.2 billion in 1991 to $0.69 billion in 2001. Although growth was higher than expected in 2002, a downturn is expected in 2003, owing to poor rainfall and the continuation of fighting in the first half of the year. The Burundi franc, the national currency, has lost almost 30 per cent of its value since 2001. The devaluation decided in August 2002 has led to a sharp increase in the price of fuel, construction material and other consumer products.

36. More than 90 per cent of the population of Burundi is rural. Coffee represents 85 per cent of the country's commercial export, and the decline of its price in the commodities market has reduced foreign exchange earnings by more than 60 per cent. Tea and cotton are also grown for trade and some industrial firms process those products. The country remains under-industrialized, however, with some potential developments in the mining and hydroelectric sectors. Intensification of the traditional economic sectors and diversification of the economy are major challenges for the development of the country. Labour-intensive projects are also needed to deal with the high level of unemployment.

37. The budgetary situation in Burundi is extremely difficult, and the Government has requested urgent budget support to finance critical current expenditure, such as salaries, and engage in capacity-building and governance-related activities. Representatives of the business sector, which the Group met during its visit to Burundi, also stressed the need for budget support so that State institutions could pay their arrears to private companies contracted by them. If this were not done, there would be a risk of general insolvency and widespread bankruptcy. High interest rates and fiscal pressure were also stressed as obstacles to private sector recovery. The integration of members of armed movements into the national army will necessarily affect the State's budget.

38. In 2002, the Government of Burundi prepared an interim poverty reduction strategy paper, which was used for the formulation of an emergency social programme in November 2002. Those documents are now used in the preparation of a poverty reduction strategy paper. The Group concurs with the observation made by IMF that the issuance of Burundi's interim poverty reduction strategy paper represents a major step forward in the development of the Government's economic strategy for the coming years. The Group has also taken note of the recommendation made in the final communiqué of the Forum of Development Partners that in the meantime there is a need for an overall "road map" that will confirm the linkages between the various development programmes initiated (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, resettlement, capacity-building, budgetary and balance-of-payments support etc.), set out what is required and when, and define a strategy for a rapid and coordinated response.

VI. The nexus between peace and development

39. Ten years of war have had a devastating impact on the socio-economic situation of Burundi, with many dimensions. The World Bank estimates that the economy has contracted by 25 per cent over the past five years, owing to the security situation. The implosion of public services, particularly health infrastructure, education and other basic social services, has led to a decline in development. On the sustainable development side, it is estimated that 35 per cent of the country's natural forest and 25 per cent of its wood plantations have been lost as a consequence of the conflict: forests were used as bases for the rebels and destructive army campaigns have been conducted to remove them. In the health sector, one of the factors in the increased prevalence of malaria throughout the country is the massive population displacements as a result of the war and the concomitant extension of rice culture and fish breeding in marshes located at high elevations (*marais des hauts plateaux*).[5]

40. Representatives of the Government of Burundi and the United Nations country team emphasized that the fight against poverty would be crucial to consolidating gains in the political field. The Group's attention was drawn to research carried out by the World Bank on assistance to post-conflict countries, which indicated that the probability of re-entering into conflict was high if improvements did not occur in people's lives within a five-year period. It is therefore essential to create a window of opportunity and break the conflict trap in Burundi through early and massive assistance.

41. In many post-conflict situations, a gap between relief and development is observed, which is manifested by an inability to transfer the momentum of crisis response to recovery, rehabilitation and development activities.[6] The Group was encouraged to witness efforts made by United Nations organizations to address this gap and ensure that, beyond humanitarian assistance, their activities contribute to longer-term rehabilitation of communities. An interesting example of this is the joint FAO/WFP emergency agricultural operations programme, which provides seeds and food intakes simultaneously to 200,000 households, in order to prevent the hungry from eating the seeds distributed to them.

42. The links between peace and development call for a comprehensive approach to the problems faced by Burundi, in which key aspects of relief, recovery, human rights, economic growth and sustainable development are included. In a report entitled "Choosing hope: the case for constructive engagement in Burundi" (Bujumbura, December 1998), the United Nations country team in Burundi regretted that such an approach, although called for by the Economic and Social Council in its agreed conclusions 1998/1,[7] had yet to be developed for that country. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group again encourages the United Nations system and the international community to develop strategies of support that cover all aspects of the transition from relief to development and ensure balanced and mutually supportive aid to the country.

VII. The role of the United Nations in addressing the needs of Burundi

43. During its visit to Burundi in November 2003, the Group witnessed the strong involvement of the United Nations in Burundi. In its various fields of work, be it political support, humanitarian assistance, rural development, health or education, the United Nations is undoubtedly a major field actor which has continued to provide assistance when bilateral and other forms of aid were frozen or considerably reduced.

44. The United Nations Office in Burundi was established in 1993, at the request of the Security Council, to support initiatives aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the Office chairs the Implementation Monitoring Committee, which is entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring the full and speedy implementation of the provisions of the Arusha Agreement. A Joint Ceasefire Commission operates as a subsidiary body of the Implementation Monitoring Committee, its chairman being appointed by the Secretary-General and reporting to his Special Representative. The Secretary-General submits a report on the situation in Burundi annually to the Security Council. Detailed and up-to-date information on political and security developments in Burundi and on the economic, humanitarian and human rights situation can be found in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2003/1146 of 4 December 2003).

45. Most major United Nations agencies, funds and programmes operate in Burundi. These are FAO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, WFP and WHO. The World Bank also has a field office in the country. The Resident Coordinator of operational activities of the United Nations system in Burundi and Humanitarian Coordinator also assumes the responsibilities of UNDP Resident Representative. The Group examined the level of collaboration between United Nations agencies. It was told that the difficult security environment prevailing in the country had stimulated mutual assistance and cooperation. Coordination mechanisms have been put in place on various aspects of the work and thematic groups and committees have been created on sectoral development activities. For example, UNDP, the World Bank and UNHCR have created through a memorandum of understanding an inter-agency unit (*cellule*) on reinsertion issues. The Group was informed that it was important that coordination focus not only on information-sharing but also on the development of common strategies and planning.

46. The United Nations system plays a crucial role in the field of humanitarian assistance, and the emergency support it provides has no doubt saved lives. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs coordinates a humanitarian Contact Group, which holds monthly meetings of all relevant United Nations and non-United Nations stakeholders, including more than 50 local and international non-governmental organizations. In addition, inter-agency technical committees work on specific humanitarian fields of work, with lead agencies for each of them. Coordination groups of United Nations agencies and partner non-governmental organizations also exist at the level of the provinces. For example, UNICEF and WFP signed a tripartite protocol of agreement with 11 international non-governmental organizations to support 248 nutritional, care and health centres throughout the country. The consolidated appeal process, as discussed above, also

contributes to increased coordination at the planning level of assistance and onwards.

47. As for development support, the United Nations system implements programmes that aim at building capacities in rural areas, including productive capacities, developing income-generating activities and promoting, inter alia, food security, support to communities and the education of girls. The second country cooperation framework for Burundi (2002-2004) was prepared by UNDP and approved by its Executive Board in September 2001. Its strategic programme areas are combating poverty and HIV/AIDS as well as democratic and economic governance. Most importantly, the United Nations country team is about to finalize the common country assessment for Burundi, the preparation of which was delayed because of the political situation. On the basis of the common country assessment, United Nations agencies are now preparing the United Nations Development Assistance Framework, which should be finalized in the first quarter of 2004. Burundi, which was exempted from this exercise, is steadily coming back into the normal process of planning assistance by the United Nations system.

48. The Commission on Human Rights has appointed Marie-Thérèse A. Kéita-Bocoum as Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi. Ms. Kéita-Bocoum reports annually to the Commission and to the Third Committee of the General Assembly.[8] The Special Rapporteur, who also briefed the Ad Hoc Advisory Group, analyses the situation of human rights, justice and the rule of law and addresses important recommendations to the parties in conflict, the Burundian authorities and the international community. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has an office in Burundi, which monitors and promotes human rights and judicial reform.

VIII. International donor support to address the needs of Burundi

49. International financial assistance to Burundi fell by 66 per cent from 1990 to 2002. After the crisis of October 1993 and the embargo in 1996, international cooperation was suspended. Starting in 1998, several meetings on Burundi were organized and an agreement was reached on a strategy of providing exclusively humanitarian assistance. A conference held in Paris in December 2000, a few days after the signing of the Arusha Agreement, led to a decision to resume structural assistance to Burundi. At that Conference, donor pledges were estimated at $450.31 million. In addition, it was decided to organize regular donor meetings. The subsequent donor round tables (held at Geneva in December 2001 and November 2002) led to a steady growth in donor pledges, estimated in total at $981.62 million.

50. In spite of the repeated commitments, disbursements have been slow and limited to $354.20 million or 36 per cent of total pledges. Most of the disbursements by bilateral donors have been used for humanitarian activities, often channelled through non-governmental organizations. multilateral institutions have however been more forthcoming in providing budgetary and balance-of-payments support as well as development project assistance. The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have provided this support under post-conflict emergency programmes. The Bank disbursed in 2002 and 2003 the two first tranches ($20 million each) of an economic rehabilitation credit amounting to $54 million, while IMF approved two

drawings of $13 million in post-conflict emergency assistance. The European Union has also provided budget support ($37.62 million), while UNDP disbursed $16.22 million in project and technical assistance and IFAD $4.52 million.[9] Some bilateral donors, such as Belgium and France, have also provided budget support.

51. On 13 and 14 January 2004, Burundi organized the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi in Brussels, in cooperation with the Government of Belgium and with the technical support of UNDP. The objective of the Forum was to draw broad and active support by bilateral and multilateral actors for Burundi to put an end to socio-economic chaos and allow Burundi to engage in poverty alleviation and sustainable development. Requests for assistance included four themes, each with financial requirements, for a total of $1.7 billion: (a) budgetary and balance-of-payments support ($942.8 million for the period 2003-2006), including external debt relief; (b) support to the national programme for capacity-building for good governance, including democratic, administrative and economic governance ($99.9 million for 2004 and 2005); (c) a programme of support to the reform process of the defence and security forces ($80 million); and (d) the National Programme for the Rehabilitation of War Victims (*Sinistrés*) (€500 million), including rural rehabilitation activities.

52. Twenty-five countries were represented, as well as the African Union, the European Union, the World Bank and IMF. The Ad Hoc Advisory Group participated in the Forum and was represented by its Chairmen, Ambassador Kumalo, Ambassador De Ruyt and Ambassador Nteturuye. Ambassador Kumalo was invited to make a statement on the Group's work and findings at the opening meeting of the Forum. Participants in the Forum pledged $1.032 billion of assistance to Burundi. Donors expressed their satisfaction with progress made in the peace process and recognized that the country was at a crossroads, which called for a renewed commitment to support, to consolidate gains and commence in the second phase of the transition process, allowing for transition from relief to development assistance. Donors also stressed the subregional dimensions of the solutions to Burundi's development problems.

53. In its final communiqué, the Forum decided, inter alia, to establish a follow-up committee which will help in promoting coordination among donors. The Committee, chaired by the Government of Burundi and composed of representatives of the Government and donors, will hold monthly meetings. Participants also agreed to meet every year, preferably in Bujumbura, to assess the political, economic and social situation in the country.

54. Because budgetary support is essential for Burundi, the Group was informed by representatives of IMF and the World Bank of the efforts by the authorities of Burundi to ensure transparency and accountability in public expenditure, including through public expenditure reviews.

55. Burundi's foreign debt (86 per cent multilateral) represents 204 per cent of the gross national product, and its servicing absorbs 98.8 per cent of all revenues. The arrears to the African Development Bank ($35 million) are of particular concern and a solution is urgently needed for Burundi to access other multilateral facilities. A Multilateral Debt Trust Fund has been established by the World Bank, a mechanism which has proved efficient in other post-conflict countries. The donor community has repeatedly been called upon to contribute to the Fund. As for bilateral debt (14 per cent of the total), the Paris Club announced in December 2003 that debt relief

would be granted as soon as the Executive Board of IMF had approved access by Burundi to the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.

56. On 23 January 2004, 10 days after the Forum of Development Partners, the Executive Board of IMF approved a three-year arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility for Burundi. The Group was informed that Burundi would qualify under the HIPC Initiative by the beginning of 2005.

IX. Observations and recommendations

57. The Economic and Social Council Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Burundi realizes that its work is being conducted at an important moment, as the people of Burundi are tackling the peace process with vigour and as they embark on the road from relief to development. The country faces various and interlinked challenges, which it is crucial to confront in order to promote stability and ensure durable peace and sustainable development. Among them, maintaining the momentum and consolidating the peace process, promoting stability and engaging in poverty alleviation and sustainable development deserve particular attention. The Group is much encouraged by the serious commitment and efforts made by Burundi to cope with these challenges. It is clear, however, that those efforts alone are not enough and that a strong partnership with the international community is required. While access by the country to international assistance has continued to be limited, the Group feels that the time has come to match the efforts of the Government and people of Burundi with substantive, prompt and effective support from the international community in order to reinforce a true partnership.

58. With all this in mind, the Group wishes to make the following observations and recommendations for consideration and possible action by the Economic and Social Council.

A. Maintaining the momentum and consolidating the peace process

59. The Group welcomes with satisfaction the appointment of a transitional Government of national unity and the inclusion therein of the representatives of CNDD-FDD (Nkurunziza) following the recent adoption of the Pretoria Protocols, which led to the Global Ceasefire Agreement between the Transitional Government and CNDD-FDD, signed at Dar es Salaam on 16 November 2003.

60. The Group welcomes the recent meeting, held in the Netherlands, between President Ndayizeye and a delegation of PALIPEHUTU-FNL, and expresses the strong hope that this step forward will bring the PALIPEHUTU-FNL of Agathon Rwasa fully into the peace process and put an end to hostilities and acts of violence.

61. The Group recalls the provisions of the Arusha Agreement of 28 August 2000 on the holding of elections before the end of the transition period and recognizes that there is a need to create a conducive atmosphere aimed at putting in place a democratic, inclusive and legitimate system of governance based on fair and free elections in Burundi. Should the Government seek technical assistance from the United Nations for those elections, the Group recommends a positive response.

62. The Group recalls that, in accordance with the Arusha Agreement, a National Truth and Reconciliation Commission is to be established, and that the Transitional Government has requested the Security Council to establish an international judicial commission of inquiry into genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity. Both are under consideration.

63. The Group commends the African Union for the crucial role played by the African Mission in Burundi, and calls on donors to provide financial support to enable it to carry out its mandate, including in the field of pre-cantonment of combatants. The Group also calls on the United Nations to support the efforts of AMIB with a view to enabling it to discharge its crucial responsibilities with regard to the peace process effectively.

B. Promoting stability

64. The Group appreciates the enormous challenges of the resettlement of refugees and internally displaced persons and calls for urgent supplementary action and support by the Government and its development and humanitarian partners. It stresses in particular the important work of UNHCR in assisting refugees returning from exile and carefully preparing for their resettlement. The Group calls for the consolidation of the activities of the National Commission for the Rehabilitation of *Sinistrés* and for the funding of its work by the Government and donors, as foreseen in the Arusha Agreement.

65. The Group recommends that the Government, in view of the already high population density and the expected need to resettle large numbers of returning refugees and internally displaced persons, address the issue of access to land. The Group further recommends that the Government consider traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, such as the *Bashingantahe*.

66. The Group emphasizes the need to proceed urgently with the disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-combatants, welcomes the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme managed by the World Bank and calls on donors to mobilize resources to finance the entire range of disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration activities, including the pre-cantonment of combatants and the restructuring of the security forces, and invites all parties concerned to coordinate closely in this regard. The Group also emphasizes the need to address effectively the specific situation of the child soldiers, in particular in the context of the agreement between the Government of Burundi and UNICEF on the demobilization of child soldiers.

67. The Group recognizes that, as a consequence of 10 years of war and the resulting deterioration of law and order, Burundi faces a growing problem of violence against women and children, and an emerging phenomenon of corruption and acts of banditry in some parts of the country. The Group stresses the need for the Government to make every effort to promote the rule of law.

68. The Group urges the authorities of Burundi to ensure the protection of human rights as a vital requirement for a peaceful society and necessary condition for stability in the country. The Group calls on the authorities to consider and ensure proper follow-up to the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi.

C. Engaging in poverty alleviation and sustainable development

69. The Group stresses that ensuring food security remains a major challenge for the country and that dependence on food aid should be gradually reduced through the promotion of self-reliance at the community level. It calls on the authorities of Burundi to intensify efforts to rehabilitate the agricultural sector. It also calls on international organizations, particularly FAO and WFP, and donors to continue substantial assistance to government efforts in this field.

70. The Group calls on the Government to intensify efforts to rebuild the basic infrastructure in the public health sector, and underlines the importance of the full engagement of the international community in this effort. The Group expresses concern about the alarming spread of malaria and the high prevalence of HIV/AIDS. It welcomes the implementation of the new protocol for the treatment of malaria with the support of WHO, UNICEF and non-governmental organizations, and the strategy to tackle the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS. The Group invites the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to allocate funds for these activities. It also calls on the authorities to facilitate administrative procedures for the import of drugs, thus alleviating the shortage of medicine.

71. The Group stresses that education is a key lever for a sustainable post-crisis recovery and to sustain gains in reconciliation in the country. The Group encourages the Government to implement its national Plan of Action for Education, to facilitate access to education for all, including by waiving school fees for indigent children, and to promote in particular the education of girls. The Group also calls for substantial international support in this field.

72. The Group urges the Government to formulate a comprehensive economic diversification strategy with a view to finding new sources of growth and employment opportunities and expanding its range of exports. Such a strategy should include diversification of activities connected to the agricultural sector, including creating capacities for the processing of agricultural products; promoting labour-intensive projects, such as short-term public works and longer-term infrastructure rehabilitation; engaging in urban development, including housing; and developing services which would contribute positively to the long-term development of the Burundian economy. The Group invites relevant United Nations entities, the World Bank and other partners to assist the authorities of Burundi in this task.

D. Reinforcing international partnership

73. The Group stresses that humanitarian assistance remains indispensable in Burundi and welcomes the consolidated appeal process for 2004 as an integrated and comprehensive tool for international support to humanitarian work, and calls on the donor community to widely support this endeavour and significantly increase the amount of financial contributions to the projects included in the appeal. The Group also recalls the need to facilitate as much as possible the activities carried out by non-governmental organizations to bring humanitarian assistance to the people of Burundi.

74. The Group stresses that, as the political process moves forward, there is also a need to engage in more development-oriented activities with a view to rehabilitating communities and strengthening the capacity of both civil society and State

institutions to lay the ground for medium- and long-term development. It encourages the Government to prepare a poverty reduction strategy paper.

75. The Group welcomes the preparation by the United Nations country team of the common country assessment for Burundi, and underlines the importance of a solid analytical framework for coordinated international assistance. It encourages the country team to prepare the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as a strategic business plan of the United Nations operational agencies in the country and to coordinate closely in its elaboration with other development partners.

76. The Group calls for adequate financial support to relevant programmes and policies elaborated by the Government as well as projects submitted by United Nations agencies and other partners with the view to ensuring a transition from relief to development.

77. The Group commends the authorities of Burundi for their efforts to ensure financial accountability, including public expenditure reviews in spite of the war situation, and welcomes the Government's assurances that budgetary support will be used in a transparent manner.

78. The Group stresses the need to find an urgent and pragmatic solution to the burden of external debt, which has reached unsustainable proportions. It calls on the donor community to contribute to the Multilateral Debt Trust Fund established by the World Bank to help the country clear its arrears, including the arrears to the African Development Bank. The Group welcomes the commitment by the Paris Club to grant debt relief as soon as the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility arrangement for Burundi was approved by the Executive Board of IMF. It urges other donors to grant debt relief in comparable terms.

79. The Group welcomes the assistance provided by the Bretton Woods institutions to Burundi and encourages them to continue their support. It welcomes the approval by IMF on 23 January 2004 of a three-year arrangement under the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility.

80. The Group welcomes the success of the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi, held on 13 and 14 January 2004 in Brussels, and concurs with the final communiqué of the Forum in stressing the importance of translating, as a matter of priority, the commitments made into tangible assistance. The Group urges bilateral donors to provide further emergency assistance to Burundi, especially budgetary support, at this critical moment in the evolution of the peace process. It welcomes the establishment of a follow-up committee to the Forum of Development Partners of Burundi, which will hold monthly meetings.

Notes

[1] See Council decision 2002/304 of 25 October 2002.

[2] It is recalled that the Security Council mission to Burundi in June 2003 recommended that the Council urge donor countries to fulfil commitments made and to follow up closely this point with the international financial community (see S/2003/653).

[3] UNAIDS, *Report on the global HIV/AIDS epidemic*, 2002.

[4] UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003* (United Nations publication, Sales No. 03.III.B.1).

[5] WHO, "Le point sur le changement du protocole de traitement du paludisme au Burundi", November 2003.

[6] UNDP, "Closing the gap"; contribution to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee reference group on post-conflict reintegration, June 1999.

[7] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-third Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/53/3), chap. VII.

[8] For the latest report, see A/58/448.

[9] Burundi, Ministry of Planning, Development and Reconstruction, Progress report on donor pledges made at the various round tables, June 2003.